

Host Nation COVID-19 News Stories for April 28

No increase risk of contagion when using euro notes

Europe's currency administrators do not see an increased risk of infection from banknotes with the novel coronavirus. The results of laboratories with which the European Central Bank (ECB) cooperates indicated "that 10 to 100 times as many viruses survive on surfaces such as plastic in the first few hours as on our banknotes," wrote ECB Director Fabio Panetta in an article published in several European newspapers, including the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung". Other analyses showed that the transmission of the virus was significantly lower on porous surfaces of cotton banknotes than on smooth surfaces such as plastic. "Compared to other surfaces that people come into contact with on a daily basis, banknotes as a whole do not present an increased risk of infection," Panetta wrote. According to Panetta, the demand for cash increased significantly at the beginning of the Corona crisis. The value of the additional bills put into circulation each week rose rapidly in mid-March and almost reached its historic high of 19 billion euros. *(News channel Focus April 28, 2020)*

Infection rate in Germany increases again

The reproduction rate rose to 1.0 for the first time since mid-March. This is the result of the current report of the Robert Koch Institute (RKI). As a consequence, this means that one infected person in Germany infects another person on average. Politicians and experts at the RKI have stated that their goal is to reduce the infection rate to below 1.0 in the long term in order to contain the pandemic in the long term. It is not yet possible to say exactly what the current increase is connected with. The incubation period of the virus is up to 14 days. The Easter holidays ended two weeks ago. *(News channel Ard April 27, 2020)*

More than three million corona infections worldwide

Since the beginning of the Corona pandemic, more than three million infections with the novel virus have been detected worldwide. This is shown by data from the University of Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. According to the data, more than 207,000 people have already died after infection with the corona virus. The university's website is regularly updated with incoming data and therefore shows a higher level of confirmed infections than the official figures of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US health authority CDC. In some cases, however, the figures have recently been corrected to lower levels.

In the USA, a country with about 330 million inhabitants, there are significantly more known infections with the new Corona virus than in any other country in the world. The detected cases, account for about one third of all confirmed infections worldwide. However, the figures for the individual countries can only be compared to

a limited extent due to the different testing rates and a high number of unreported cases. (*John Hopkins data April 28, 2020*)

Retail expects as many as 50,000 bankruptcies

The retail industry expects up to 50,000 insolvencies of retail stores as a result of the Corona crisis. "In the four weeks of store closures in the non-food sector, we lost around 30 billion in sales, which we will not get back. This was around 1 billion euros per day," said Stefan Genth, Chief Executive of the German Retail Association (HDE), to the newspapers of the Funke Media Group. Since many stores have reopened, customer traffic has been slow. Currently, the retail sector "continues to lose a high three-digit million amount every day". The trade association fears 50,000 insolvencies because the equity capital of many companies is insufficient, especially due to high rent demands. "Institutional landlords in particular are often not prepared to defer rent - or they demand deferral interest of 5 to 9 percent," criticizes Genth. "Here we demand risk sharing." Both large chain stores and small businesses are affected. "We are very much afraid that after the crisis the inner cities will not look the same as before the crisis - many shops will be missing", said the HDE managing director. (*News channel Ntv April 28, 2020*)

Interrupting spread of Corona quickly is hope for new App

To have the Corona App on your Smartphone is the "most important keys to a new everyday life", said Federal Health Minister Jens Spahn, CDU, about the further measures to contain the corona virus.

Federal Health Minister Jens Spahn (CDU) pleads for the debate on the Corona App to be "simply pragmatic for once".

According to Spahn, questions are: "Which data is at stake? Who would even have access to which data? He takes the concerns of the population against the app "very, very seriously". It is about sensitive and very personal data.

Aim of the Corona App: Break infection chains quickly.

The aim of the Corona App is to be able to identify, inform and request all contact persons of an infected person from the last few days to stay at home as quickly as possible. "This is also one of the most important keys on the way to a new everyday life and in dealing with this virus," says Spahn.

It is a matter of an everyday life "that should mean as much everyday life as possible - and at the same time reduce the risk of infection for everyone as much as possible". This balance can only be achieved step by step. (*ZDF heute, April 24*)

Traditional Maypole festival "Maibaum Hocketse" cancelled

Due to the Corona crisis and the corresponding regulation of the country, this year in Sindelfingen the Maypole erection and the Maypole festival season are cancelled. This was announced by City Marketing on Monday lunchtime. The announcement also states: "with all involved parties, such as the Sindelfingen Fire Department, the

Forestry administration and other companies, , who have played a major role in erecting the maypole in recent years, we are looking forward to a joint may festival next year. We wish everyone a happy holiday and hope you stay healthy.
(*Boeblinger Kreiszeitung*, April 27)

How schools prepare for the opening

On May 4, classes will begin again for the final classes. But there is still no question of normality, because strict safety rules apply. Nadia Bescherer-Zeidan, the Principal of the Robert Koch Secondary School in Vaihingen, describes her current working day as "varied and never-ending". In the past few days, she has been travelling a lot with the folding rule in the school building. To measure how many pupils fit into a classroom when the minimum distance of 1.50 meters must be maintained. To consider how tables and chairs can be placed. How wide are the corridors, and where do one-way streets have to be designated because the corridor is too narrow? Bescherer-Zeidan has ordered adhesive tape to apply appropriate markings on the floor, just as we now know it from supermarkets. "Young people need a visual signal," she says.

Next week the senior classes will return to their schools. This is what the State Government has decided. In the case of the Robert-Koch-Realschule, that means 128 ninth and tenth graders from a total of eight classes. "We have large classes, so we have to divide them into three and form 24 groups," says the headmistress. The plan is for the ninth and tenth graders to come on two days. They will then have intensive lessons in the morning. For the time being, only the main subjects maths, German and English will be taught. There are only small ten-minute breaks in the classrooms. The girls and boys have to bring their own snacks. The fifth day at school is reserved for the young people who, for various reasons, who do not get along so well with homeschooling.

Classes for the final classes at the Grammar schools will also begin again on May 4. But while there are fixed class groups at the Realschule, the eleventh and twelfth graders will be learning in small groups. This means that each pupil has his or her own timetable and the composition of the groups changes constantly. For Frank Bäuerle, the Principal of Hegel-Gymnasium, this is a special challenge. After all, there must be at least 48 hours between occupying a classroom with two different courses, i.e. with different pupils. "That's why we do block teaching. That means a German and a Math day and so on. That way we have the least possible variance between the groups," says Bäuerle. Even at Hegel-Gymnasium, not all 120 pupils will be on site at the same time. Sometimes the eleventh and sometimes the twelfth graders are allowed or required to attend. And just like at the neighboring Robert Koch Realschule, classes will begin at different times. The aim is to straighten everything out as well as possible. The top priority is to observe the rules of distance. For this purpose, certain walking routes are marked with adhesive tapes. In addition, the school is large enough that all eleventh and twelfth graders can come at the same time. They enter the school building through three entrances. One problem, however, is the way there, because many come by bus. Schneider-Frey had to report exactly how many. She assumes that those responsible will monitor the situation in the first week of May and then, if necessary, deploy more buses so that there is not too much space in the vehicles.

The smaller problem is the adherence to the hygienic standards

. In all classrooms there are wash basins and soap, as well as in the sanitary rooms. The toilets are cleaned and disinfected particularly thoroughly and, if necessary, more often. The caretakers would check this meticulously. The two Vaihingen headmasters do not oblige young people at their schools to wear masks. But whoever wants to, can of course wear an everyday mask. Only during the long breaks, wearing of masks is mandatory. (*Stuttgarter Nachrichten April 27*)